

MARLOW - MAIDENHEAD PASSENGERS' ASSOCIATION

Newsletter 176 December 2017

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Timetables

Where members have opted to receive paper timetables for GWR these are included with this newsletter. The new timetables start 1 January 2018. The situation with Chiltern Railways is unclear as they have stopped or propose to stop issuing paper timetables. The new timetable for Chiltern starts on Sunday December 10th 2017. We have obtained a supply of the timetable for the Marylebone to Aylesbury service which is enclosed if appropriate to your location.

GWR franchise extension

The DfT has confirmed it will extend the current GWR franchise by 12 months until April 2020. It has also confirmed the intention to discuss with GWR a further direct award franchise lasting at least two years. With the franchise undergoing infrastructure and rolling stock enhancement programme through 2018 and 2019, maintaining continuity of operator should ensure the best possible service for passengers throughout. The further continuation will allow a short period for the new trains and service patterns including Crossrail to bed in before the next franchise competition, creating the right conditions to secure the best possible outcomes for passengers from that competition. As part of the consultation, DfT also invites views on whether the franchise should remain in its current form or be split into smaller franchises, each with the strongest possible focus on the needs of passengers in its own area. GWR have invited MMPA to take part in the consultation.

Crossrail campaign

The MMPA continues to campaign for more seats and fitting of toilets in the new Crossrail trains. Approaches to organisations or individuals who might be affected have not been productive so far. The Maidenhead Advertiser held a poll among readers as to whether Crossrail trains should have toilets. 83% of the 1500 replies said they should.

Spencer's Farm development

Proposals have been published for a development of up to 500 dwellings at Spencer's Farm, northern Maidenhead. MMPA attended a consultation evening at Furze Platt and submitted comments. Principal weakness of the design is the single road access from the site with Aldebury Road onto the Cookham Road. Website of the development is at www.spencersfarm.co.uk.

Bourne End track change

Land surveys at Bourne End have been carried out with a view to reinstating the track connection that will allow a half hourly service to Maidenhead all day.

Further surveys should be complete before Christmas. Next stage of the design process is due in May.

Cookham Ticket Office

With the closure of Cookham Station building for repair GWR have brought in a Portacabin to house staff to sell tickets though we understand this may only be the case for the morning peak. This leads to long queues at Paddington for those forced to travel without a ticket. This also applies to Taplow passengers – see below. Works on the Cookham ticket office have been completed and GWR are seeking an update on the likely opening date.

Taplow failings & transfer to TfL

On numerous occasions members travelling from Taplow have difficulties with obtaining tickets or permits to travel and have to queue at Paddington to get a ticket. Although reported these problems seem to occur repeatedly. If you have any such problems when travelling from Taplow please report it to GWR and copy MMPA. Recently car park tickets could only be obtained by mobile phone as the machines were wrapped in black plastic! From December Taplow Station will transfer from GWR and become the responsibility of Transport for London.

There is doubt that the original footbridge will be reinstated. Discussions regarding access from the proposed new footbridge and lifts to platform 1 and the south car park are ongoing.

Meetings reports

MMPA organised the meeting of the Marlow Branch Working Group on 16th October. Issues discussed included:

- Details of promised infill services in the morning
- Confirmation that ticket vending machines would be installed at Marlow and Cookham on the 12th December; because of the isolated position they would be card only.
- Survey work at Bourne End station to enable 2 trains per hour on the whole branch has been booked with Network Rail and Atkins in October/ November. A viable track design should be signed off by May 2018 but NR can take a further 3 months to finalise. A completion date for the track work could not be advised. Pro tem a shuttle service from Bourne End to Marlow and a 2 trains per hour twixt Bourne End and Maidenhead was requested but GWR

claimed that this would not be viable.

- RBWM was asked to find out the finishing date of work on Cookham Station and to ensure the installation of RADAR locks on toilet doors at the station. This was deemed essential due to lack of facilities on Crossrail trains and compliance with current disability legislation.

(NOTE: MMPA has since been advised that GWR will not be providing RADAR locks as they are frequently vandalised.)

- RBWM is having difficulty finding a satisfactory design for the interchange hub and upgrade of access to Maidenhead Station mainly due to traffic flow and pedestrian safety.
- RBWM to find out if any progress has been made in ensuring that in times of flooding the 37 bus route continues to run between Maidenhead and Wycombe via the villages that were on the route of the branch i.e. Cookham Bourne End Wooburn and Loudwater (either by arranging for bus tickets to be available on trains or by a bus enabled to go through small amounts of water or use the causeway at Cookham)

Chiltern Railways paper timetables

Chiltern Railways appear to have stopped issuing paper timetables. MMPA appreciates not all passengers are in a position to obtain travel information digitally so will be pressing for retention of paper documents.

High Wycombe Platform 1 issue

The long walk from Platform 3 at High Wycombe to the bay platform 1 - timed at 9 mins - shows no sign of being resolved. A proposal to add a repeater signal nearer the station building has been ruled out by Network Rail claiming the cost is excessive.

High Wycombe car park exit issue

Commuters leaving High Wycombe Station in the evenings find that egress from the car park is usually extremely slow as the phasing of the traffic lights does not favour the station exit. This has been brought to the attention of Wycombe District Council but so far there has been no change. MMPA will continue to press for action on this.

Marlow Station exit lighting

It has been reported that street lighting at the exit to Marlow Station is inadequate. MMPA will request that some of the S106 money from the adjacent development be used for improvement. Ticket Machine installation has been delayed because of procurement issues. GWR are now targeting installation in February.

Cookham Parish Council

Cookham Parish Council have written to the GWR

Franchise Competition Manager regarding issues they would like to see resolved in the existing franchise or its replacement:

1. Half-hourly service (from Marlow) throughout the day without the need to change trains at Bourne End
2. Above services to be timed to facilitate connections at Maidenhead to/from mainline services with adequate contingency to allow for inevitable delays to incoming trains
3. Refurbishment of Cookham Station (currently closed due to dry rot) and WC access for all passengers (disabled or otherwise) outside ticket office opening hours
4. Provision of ticket machine at Cookham Station
5. Customer Information System to display correct information for a given SLA% (DfT to specify %), this often shows misleading information when services are delayed or cancelled
6. The commitment to maintaining facilities, opening times and services at Cookham Station as delivered at the beginning of 2017 (prior to its temporary closure); and
7. Provision of modern traction units

Launch of Inter City Express services

An article about the initial run of the Class 800 (Inter City Express) from Paddington is available on the MMPA web page: <https://www.mmpa.org.uk/iet-launch/index.html>

MMPA website award

Railfuture has given a Silver Award to MMPA in the Best Web Site category of its Rail User Group Awards. The Stourbridge Line User Group took the Gold. The certificate was presented by Railfuture Honorary President, Christian Wolmar, at the recent conference in Leicester. Congratulations to MMPA Webmaster Richard Porter.

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TRAVEL INFORMATION

BBC Radio Berkshire:	95.4, 104.1 FM, DAB, or 08459 - 311333
National Rail Enquiries	08457 - 484950 (24 hrs) or www.nationalrail.co.uk or text
Great Western Railway:	08457-000125 (0700–2200 daily)
Chiltern Railways:	08456 - 005165 (08.30 – 17.30)
Arriva Bus:	0844 8004411 (0900 - 1700 Mon - Fri)
First Berks Buses:	01753 524144
Carousel Buses:	01494 533436
Traveline:	0871 2002233 (0700 - 2200) 10p/min on BT landline
RBWM helpline	01628 796666

Also see our web site www.mmpa.org.uk for links, news and to report issues.

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